Brochure of Information on the Formulation of the Hungarian Information Society Strategy and the Schedule of Further Tasks

1. Introduction – On the Threshold of Two New Eras

At its meeting held on 18 December 2002, the Government approved the proposal regarding the formulation of the Hungarian Information Society Strategy (HISS) which will summarize the measures taken to date towards the formulation of the strategy and will determine our future tasks and their exact schedule. By approving the proposed decisions, the Government will create all the conditions which will result in the implementation of a system necessary for the medium- and short-term planning and coordination of the tasks facilitating the development of the new economy, the information society. The medium-term plan of action relating to the years 2004 to 2006 and the annual plan of action for the year 2004 will be completed in October 2003. The annual plans for subsequent years may then be prepared annually, "on a rolling basis", in September of the year preceding the subject year, which will also facilitate the planning of the central budget with a "resource map" relating to informatics.

The proposal incorporates a former proposal of the Ministry of Informatics and Telecommunication approved in inter-departmental negotiations which is about setting up the Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee for the Information Society (IDCCIS). Since setting up the inter-departmental committee is one of the measures necessary for creating the system described above, we believe it is desirable to offer a standard government resolution for approval which would incorporate the proposed motions in relation to IDCCIS, in such a way that we shall submit our proposal modified with regard to any comments as Appendix No. 1 to the Government Resolution.

In the third millennium, Hungary simultaneously joins the European Union and the information society. One event assumes the occurrence of the other. Hungary is not the only country to face the beginning of a new era; the others lining up to join the EU and even the existing member states are about to enter a new phase.

The stake is common: the success of the individual nation states in Europe and the position of Europe as a whole in the ever keener global competition will depend on the effectiveness of this transition towards the information society.

Europe, as a world region, is at a competitive disadvantage in creating an information culture and a new knowledge-based economy. The Hungarian strategy of the information society is therefore simultaneously aimed at significantly improving our country's competitive position and at contributing to the improvement of the European region's positions in the world economy.

At the same time, the information era offers the nation a historic opportunity: the competitive disadvantages which have stemmed from our geographical situation and the lack of natural resources may be eliminated or reduced. As a result, not only would we able to improve our external competitiveness but would also have a chance

to reduce the social inequities which increased so dramatically during the period following the change of regime and to reinforce social cohesion. In addition, in harmony with the processes within the European Union, the technologies of information communication allow us to forge even closer cultural ties with the Hungarians living beyond our borders and to launch new forms of economic cooperation.

For Hungary, on the verge of joining the European Union and striving to achieve welfare across the whole of society, to attain the level of development characterizing the successful European regions, and to give a competitive edge to the Hungarian economy, the approval and implementation of the Hungarian Information Society Strategy (HISS), coordinated with the Government's National Development Plan formulated for the years 2004 to 2006 and the European Union's e-Europe Programme, is a crucial ambition.

Strategic planning began after the establishment of the Ministry of Informatics and Telecommunication. The Preliminary Study on the Hungarian Information Society Strategy which serves to lay the foundations for the strategy has been completed. It undertook to perform four tasks.

- It looked into previously formulated IT strategies and recommendations and treated them as precursors.
- It endeavoured to reveal the segments which may be assessed from the respect of the information society in Hungary at present in as much detail as possible.
- It evaluated the international situation and trends, with special regard to the European Union, the country's accession to the Union and the National Development Plan in particular.
- It outlined the potential scenarios and the objectives that could be set.

The completion of the study is an important milestone in the process of the formulation of the strategy.

2. Purpose of the Strategy

The Hungarian Information Society Strategy is an information strategy concerning the whole of the nation. It is not merely the programme of an industry or sector but that of the transformation of the whole of society. HISS serves to help Hungarian society become the winner of the information era. The stake is establishing Hungary's competitiveness upon its accession to the Union and creating a more effective knowledge economy. To this end, we wish to define the government's tasks in serving the creation of the information society by integrating the part-strategies which specify the responsibilities of the individual sectors. These part-strategies must be in harmony with one another and must point in the same direction because this is the only way that they may effectively contribute to the development of the information society in Hungary.

The success of the information transformation taking place currently will determine the future of the nation, the course of the development of Hungarian society and the

lives of citizens for many decades. HISS treats the cause of the information society as a matter of the highest priority and raises the programme of the construction of the information society to the level of a government programme.

With this strategy, the Government intends to encourage the wide-spread use of information and communication technologies and the development of new technological solutions. With recourse to adequate monitoring, regulatory and standardization institutions, it ensures that competition on the market is created and maintained. It promotes the demand for digital culture and the satisfaction of that demand. It embraces all initiatives, application and content developments which enable and help every resident in Hungary to gain advantages, to take part in the information society and to play an active role in the globalizing worldwide web in Europe and throughout the world, while retaining our specific Hungarian values.

The development of a knowledge-based economy and the information society is a relentless process. It is essential for the Government to assume an active role in this process in order to ensure that these changes take place within the shortest possible time, also in areas where this would not otherwise be guaranteed by the operation of the market forces alone, and to improve the country's competitiveness and social and regional equality.

Time Scale of the Strategy

A period of some 10 to 12 years will be necessary to attain the objectives of the strategy, that is, catching up with the average of the European Union evaluated on the basis of the indicators of the information society. The "vision of the future" forming part of HISS determines the long-term objectives.

The strategy sets three-year objectives in the most important areas of catching up.

The short-term tasks serving to attain the strategic objectives are set forth in the annual governmental plans of action.

3. Vision of the Future – Where Are We Heading?

Proceeding on the course of development described in the script of the National Development Plan and effectively utilizing the available EU funds, Hungary will, within a short time, successfully change over from the resource-driven phase of development to an innovation-driven phase. This will enable us to retain the high growth rate typical of the reconstruction phase of the transition over a longer period of time, and Hungary may as a result catch up with the advanced member states of the Union in several areas by 2015. In Hungary's information society, the continuous improvement of living standards is guaranteed by a regionally balanced, ecologically and economically sustainable growth which relies on the increasing competitiveness and profitability of the knowledge-based economy. Through conscious use of the opportunities offered by the internal market, the common currency, the EU institutions and the European networks, Hungary, as an EU member, will have a far better chance of successfully facing the challenges of globalization and technological

development. While making the most of its own opportunities, Hungary is therefore fundamentally interested in effectively contributing to the internal renewal of the European Union and its transformation into a successful and open 21st century global power centre.

The large regions which are evolving through the modernization of the public sphere will be able to offer an efficient framework not only for the development of regions within Hungary but also for the development of cross-border regions. This will greatly contribute to the modernization and improved competitiveness of Hungarian companies, among them, the sector of small and medium-sized enterprises.

By focusing on specially targeted and coordinated developments with the simultaneous existence of favourable external conditions, Hungary may not only come close to but may, in some important areas, reach or may, subject to the adequately planned efforts of the State, even exceed the average of the EU's economic standards by 2015. This requires an effective development policy and a major capital injection which will result in the wide-spread availability of the latest technologies, a considerable increase in the social knowledge base and the rapid modernization of the public sphere. Such a model is characterized, among others, by the mass availability of the latest forms of distance learning, distance health care and distance work and an increase well in excess of the EU average in our venture capital resources, research and development activities, the information industry (e.g. content industry) and living standards.

4. Current Situation – Where Are We Today?

On the whole, in the last few years, the conditions for the development of the information society have deteriorated in Hungary which makes the formulation of an overall strategy particularly important. In the following, we shall take a look at the main areas of the information transformation. Although we may experience some progress in most areas, since most of the European countries have developed more dynamically than Hungary, our disadvantage has in recent years increased in comparison with the EU average, furthermore, also within our own region most recently.

4.1. Information Economy

In the course of the development of the structures of the information society, an increasingly large part of the gross domestic product may be attributed, directly or indirectly, to information activities, and an increasingly large proportion of the country's employees works in that sector. The Hungarian economy (in contrast to the countries of the EU) cannot yet be labelled as an information economy since a smaller proportion of the total GNP is derived from information products and services. One of the most important indicators, the actual value added to the value of the individual products by the information economy is particularly low.

4.2. Information Infrastructure

The data describing the infrastructure of the information society are similar to our indicators reflecting the state of the information economy.

The ratio of fixed and mobile telephone lines in relation to 100 residents reached 68% of the EU average in Hungary in 2001 (which means that from among the countries awaiting accession, Slovenia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic and Malta are all ahead of us).

Hungary lags well behind in the number of personal computers falling on 100 residents as well. While in 2001 only 10 computers fell on every 100 citizens, which placed us in the eighth position among the countries about to join the EU, there were 30 and 60 in the EU and in the US, respectively. In Hungary, the proportion of low-efficiency information communication devices with poorer technical performance is also higher, while the ratio of network access to the Internet is lower than the EU average.

4.3. Access and Use

The availability of information communication equipment and access to the Internet at large organizations and institutions is near the European level. In the EU, where the pledge of economic viability and growth is understood to lie in the communication media of the information society, 90% of the business organizations have access to the Internet and 60% of them have home pages, while in Hungary 70% of the companies have access to the world-wide web and only 39 per cent of them have home pages of their own. Small and medium-sized enterprises are in a particularly disadvantageous position, as only a minority among them have computer equipment and only one third have access to the Internet. In the EU, the average ratio of e-commerce is around 3.6%. In Hungary, due to lack of confidence, electronic trading is negligible and is only expanding slowly.

While one quarter of all Hungarian households have computers today, in 2001, only 6 per cent of them had access to the Internet. This is a particularly low ratio (the EU average is 37%), but the same holds true of the use of the Internet by the adult population: only 17 per cent of them enter the worldwide web with some regularity. The dynamic growth of our disadvantage is an even graver problem. In contrast to the countries of the advanced world and the member states of the EU, the disadvantage of Hungary is on the increase, and its economic, innovative and cultural competitiveness has declined in recent years.

It is characteristic that with the Sulinet programme serving to link schools to the worldwide web, which was launched in 1996, we were among Europe's elite for a while; due to the slowing down of the development after 1998, we have fallen behind spectacularly: while the ratio of schools linked to the Internet is 80% in the EU, in Hungary only secondary schools are in that range (74%) and only 35 per cent of elementary schools have access to the Internet.

4.4. Contents

The majority of the population are unaffected by the advent of the information era and the idea of the information society has not yet become a widely known, accepted and exciting vision of the future. This is also due to the fact that the electronic contents and services through which the benefits of the information society could become tangible have not yet appeared or become wide-spread. Public services accessible electronically, which are now common in the EU, do not exist, a few exceptions aside. The number and use of public content services offered to citizens is increasing very slowly, while those provided for business organizations increase somewhat more dynamically.

The digitalization of cultural contents has also begun, however, there are large numbers of unfinished initiatives and parallel developments which interfere with and frustrate each another. In many cases, the format of the digitalized content and the transmission and reception of large-sized file groups create obstacles.

4.5. Attitudes

Although use of the Internet and its frequency and quality are fundamentally determined by the prevailing social and economic conditions, what is in people's "heads" occupies a prominent position among the reasons for the present situation. Among those not using the Internet, the insufficient knowledge about the means of information communication is frequent, which is coupled with a lack of interest, anxiety in some cases, and suspicion and lack of trust towards anything new. Many people also share the view that participation in the information society is far from cheap. People find the price of the equipment, as well as the costs of operation, high. It is, indeed, a regrettable fact that the telephone charges and, as a result, the costs of access to the Internet in relation to people's earnings rank Hungary among the world's most expensive countries.

4.6. Knowledge Base and Human Resources

In the last decade and a half, a large number of Hungarian informatics specialists have joined European and North American IT companies and multinational corporations. Their recognition within the profession and their qualifications constitute highly respected and valuable intellectual capital. With adequately prepared and formulated PR work, it would be possible to tap these, often hidden, resources.

4.7. Regulation

In June 2001, Hungary's Parliament passed Act XXL of 2001 on Telecommunication which came into force on 23 December 2001. The new regulation, in theory, opened the telecommunication market to competition. Nonetheless, progress remains slow in the fixed cable retail sector. Regardless of the legislation, competition has started in speech transmission (between the fixed and mobile networks) and on the mobile, Internet and data transmission markets.

Due to similar unfavourable experiences, the European Union has required its member countries to re-regulate this sphere; this will be inevitable in Hungary as well.

In harmony with the contents of the chapter entitled “Information Society” of the National Programme of the Adoption of Acquis, the legislation concerning electronic signature was a major step forward in the field of information technologies in 2001.

Act CVIII of 2001 on Certain Issues Relating to Electronic Commercial Services and Services Concerning the Information Society, which was passed by Parliament in December 2001, is another milestone in the IT-centred legislative process which started with the Act on Electronic Signature. A government resolution provided for the execution of the Act. At the same time, the creation of the legal conditions of the e-economy has not been followed by the development and considerable extension of the choice of market and administrative e-services.

5. eHungary 2004-2006

Strategic Areas of the Development of the Information Society
"e-programmes"

The vision of an effective and competitive Hungary requires the electronization of the economy, culture, communal services, major supply systems and the other spheres of society. In addition to the electronization of contents and services, this requires adequate knowledge and an infrastructure that is capable of providing the underlying services.

For the purposes of improving the country’s competitiveness in the area of information communication, through the elimination of regional differences in the entire territory of the country, we must increase the number of communal access points, and by utilizing the results of the information society, we must promote the development of a truly service providing state which equally serves the disadvantaged strata of society.

In the following, we shall first take a look at the most important general and social tasks regarding the creation of an information society in Hungary, shall determine the sectoral responsibilities essential for the attainment of this objective, and shall finally summarize the most important objectives to be achieved by 2006.

5.1 Social Responsibilities

5.1.1. eWorld

This term refers to a combination of the two perhaps most important areas of transformation, the economy and culture. No competitive and efficient economy can exist today without the rapid, mass, day-to-day utilization of information and the wide-spread availability of IT equipment and services. However, as has been proven in a number of countries around the world, in addition to the pace of economic transformation, the success of transition towards the information society greatly depends on the extent to which a society is prepared culturally and the experiences on the basis of which the vision of the information society evolves in public thinking.

By European standards, the lack of knowledge and trust in relation to the Internet and the resulting lack of interest is particularly significant in Hungary. During the period to come, the Government will have to take organized, coordinated and manifold measures to convince society of the benefits of the information society and electronic services and of the impact of information communication technology on living standards and the day-to-day life of various social groups and localities. A social strategy conveying a highly coordinated, extensive and coherent message alone is capable of presenting an attractive and clear vision of the future: Hungary wishes to join the "winning team" through the successful construction of the information society, and the smaller communities, localities, families and individuals, too, must grasp this opportunity.

The Hungarian information society is a human and inclusive e-world which offers a chance to everyone. It offers new means for human communication and minimizes the restrictions imposed by distance, time and money. The successful implementation of e-programmes also depends on whether we succeed in communicating to society this human face of the eWorld and the related positive expectations.

Incorporating the individual sectoral strategies, HISS serves to promote this objective.

5.1.2 eDemocracy

eDemocracy means a politically advanced Hungary which is attainable through the electronization of the state and local government institutions and communal services.

Once transferred to an electronic space, the transparency, controllability and accountability of democratic institutions will increase considerably. Our objective is to ensure that the work of the democratically elected bodies is based on the information communication structure and the knowledge afforded by the structure, as a result of which their work may become more effective and their decisions more professional.

The required infrastructure is partially available in the area of state administration, however, there is a lot to make up for in the field of contents and services. The basis of eDemocracy is unrestricted access to public information and the possibility of continuously tracking the work of the government, local government and other democratic bodies.

By way of electronic communication, an interactive relationship may evolve between the political elite and the public interested in politics. Referenda and various forums may help the work of the elected representatives in local matters. It would be possible to view documents, to keep track of the decision-making process and to enforce various civic initiatives. The implementation of the objectives set in this area is not primarily a problem of a technical nature but is almost exclusively a matter of authenticity and security.

The wide-spread application of electronic signature has therefore become an urgent matter for citizens and organizations. Finding a solution to the reliable verification of the quality and security of networks and IT applications can no longer be delayed either.

5.1.3 eChance

The opportunities offered by the information society offer an unparalleled chance for creating new social justice through which the former injustices of a structural origin could be reduced.

The information society may only become reality if the digital gap stemming from the differences dividing society on the basis of regional, ethnic, age, gender and status categories is reduced and social cohesion is reinforced. In the interest of bridging the "digital gap", the State must launch programmes through which every one of its citizens may acquire IT knowledge; may learn to use computers, may acquire the skills necessary for the application of software and may become capable of using the opportunities offered by access to information (and in particular, information accessible via the Internet).

Manifold and determined efforts must be made to enable the Romas and other disadvantaged, isolated or handicapped social groups to reduce their handicap by using the opportunities offered by the information society. They need special means, the acquisition and operation of which requires not only training but also ongoing financial support.

To this end, a plan of action must be formulated to help social groups that are disadvantaged from an informatics point of view and are falling behind from the respect of the information society with catching up, and to reduce the digital gap.

5.1.4 eGeneration

The implementation of the information society's strategy fundamentally depends on the affinity of the various generations towards informatics which, in turn, primarily depends on their knowledge of informatics. It is therefore no coincidence that the information society is often characterized as being "knowledge-based".

A great deal depends on the generation just beginning their adult life or just entering the labour market. The infrastructure of information communication and the knowledge conveyed by the new medium are natural to them. From the kindergarten all the way to higher education, every pupil and every student must be given a chance to acquire digital literacy and thereby become a value creating citizen that forms part of and actively contributes to the digital culture. In this area which will greatly influence the future of the nation, attainment of the EU average is the minimum goal.

In schools, as part of the Sulinet Express scheme, teachers, pupils and students must be empowered to use the full range of digital media and to form and be part of an educational and methodological culture to the highest global standards. This should also be achieved in teacher training within the shortest possible time.

Institutions of higher education must offer on-line courses which will also serve further training. Universities and research institutes must enter into cooperation schemes supported by computer technology.

While giving young generations the support they need must be a top priority, the Government should also launch programmes which will make the use of information technology attractive for today's middle generations and the elderly and will help them acquire the required skills.

In addition, it is also necessary to even out the generational differences in knowledge between social groups. To this end, the opportunities offered by the popular science programmes of the public service media should be utilized. While popularizing informatics, the fears that people may have towards informatics should be dispelled and the conditions for the acquisition of a general level of technical skills should be created.

In the interest of the implementation of these objectives, the part-strategy of education and training must be formulated and incorporated into HISS as a top priority area.

5.2 Sectoral responsibilities

The Hungarian Information Society Strategy, as the Government's strategy with an impact on the whole of society, requires the cooperation of all sectors. It is necessary for every sector to have its own strategy in response to the challenges of the new economy and information society. In the following, we shall select a number of particularly important areas in order to demonstrate this, however, we wish to stress that the formulation of HISS requires the cooperation of all sectors and ministries.

5.2.1 eState Administration

A key issue to creating a service providing state is placing the mechanisms of state administration onto a digital platform, both within and between the offices and in the relationship between the offices and their customers. This will place the customer into the centre, will increase the effectiveness, transparency and fairness of administration and will enhance trust between the State and its citizens.

In the next three years, both citizens and business organizations will have to be provided with access to round-the-clock electronic administration in several areas where possible. Citizens must become capable of proceeding in the following tasks electronically: job hunting, processing income tax returns, administration related to social security and identity cards, reporting of changes in residential addresses, enrolment in public libraries, extension of borrowing, application for courses in institutions of higher education, motor vehicle registration, requests for and reporting to the police of birth certificate details, and applications for building licences and property sheets. The following services must be made electronically accessible to business organizations: VAT and corporation tax returns, company registration, submission of customs declarations, disclosure of statistical information, participation in public procurement, obtaining of environmental licences, etc.

We must reach a level of development where anybody may use electronic signature for the purposes of the interactive and transactive processing of official matters. In respect of issues related to citizenship, health care and pension services, local and central taxes, etc. and matters requiring identification, adequately protected, confidential and safe technologies must be used.

*e*Policing should be regarded as a special area of *e*State Administration. It includes the electronic services which may be provided by the police and other law enforcement agencies. Clients need to be able to request or to provide data or information.

5.2.2. eLocal Governments

By the end of 2003, all local governments operating in Hungary will be equipped with the means of information communication necessary for their work and will be linked to a network.

There is immense potential in the citizen-friendly local governments linked to a network: in cooperation with civil society, a great deal of useful public information may become accessible to everyone, and while links with the local communities may be forged even closer, local governments may obtain other tangible benefits from their "virtual appearance" on the global market (tourism, investments, etc.). Besides the required equipment, those concerned should also be helped with development facilitating administration and training.

5.2.3. eHealth Care

The work of health care institutions and their personnel requires more and more information. IT applications play an increasingly important role in treatment, diagnostics and therapy. The financial needs in health care are on the increase continuously. While the costs of treatment rise incessantly, there is an increasing number of patients suffering from chronic diseases.

Through electronization, we wish to extend the possibilities of medical consultations and intend to avoid any superfluous parallel examinations and unnecessary, time-consuming waiting.

By organizing the strategic points of medical activities into a virtual network (home, general practitioner's surgery, specialized surgeries, hospitals), it would be possible to achieve more accurate coordination, better cooperation and a more effective flow of information and to provide physicians with access to the fullest possible range of information necessary for medical treatment.

The virtual web should be developed into the medium of patients and their family members enquiring about medical and health care information through which everybody may have access to information on healthy lifestyles, may obtain information on the factors posing a risk to their health and on medicines, may request consultation in connection with their test results and may receive information support regarding the preservation of their health or remedy to their illness.

5.2.4 eJustice

The work of courts must be electronized in a way as to ensure that the communication opportunities offered by the information society are fully utilized in the delivery of summonses, court notices and decisions, administration of cases, and archiving.

Measures should be taken to ensure that the profession, students and citizens that may be interested have easy and prompt, if possible, free-of-charge, access to the legislative material in force.

Electronic services must be provided which can guide the layperson through the labyrinth of legal problems with clear and simply-worded advice.

5.2.5. eCulture

It is the duty of the Hungarian State to preserve our national and minority cultural heritage also through the digitalization of our values. The standardized archiving of any newly generated cultural contents and the provision of access to such contents for activities serving public education and research should become basic electronic services.

To this end, digital data libraries should be created (electronic museum, archives, library) which, if the relevant technical and search standards are observed, may become a common platform for all institutions and organizations intending to develop cultural and scientific contents. The digitalization of minority cultures enables the integration and cohesion of cultural communities, reduces the isolation of diaspora communities and contributes to the enhancement of national identity, whether in the case of majority or minority national groups.

The new type of national publicity opened up by the infrastructure and media of eCulture creates new opportunities for the popularization of science, as well as for little-known provincial museums and public collections.

5.2.6 eEconomy

Full and comprehensive IT transformation of the economy
In the interest of enhancing competitiveness, increasing efficiency and promoting integration into the international economic processes, we shall make every effort in the next few years to "permeate" every sector of the economy with the culture of informatics, which has revolutionized the process of sales, business liaison and company management. This equally applies to inter-company and user relations and to the activities of producers and service providers.

Creating the conditions for safe transactions in the interest of the acquisition of reliable information and consumer protection is a task of the highest priority. We must establish the means of electronic administration of public procurement proceedings.

We must pay particular attention to the development of informatics in the agricultural sector to help farmers and agricultural businesses retain their positions in the market.

In addition to the availability of computer equipment, a precondition of this is that the market players, sellers/buyers and producers/consumers, have the skills and trust necessary for the management of the systems. The process may be enhanced through the creation of an adequate advisory and service provider background.

Major results may be expected from wide-spread recourse to remote employment as well.

IT and knowledge industry turned into leading sectors
The IT industry and the information and knowledge economy are becoming an increasingly determining part of the world economy. In order for us to have successful export companies that are able to find their niche in the market, a number of steps will have to be taken in the next few years. These steps will have to aim at raising the value of creativity, innovation, basic and applied research and continuous development. This is how knowledge may generate value.

A competition-neutral and market-friendly strategy
In formulating HISS, we must bear these two criteria in mind throughout. Any essential state interventions must be planned in a way as to ensure that they use the opportunities inherent in the operation of the market and competition on the market to the fullest possible extent. This should also apply to measures taken in the form of state subsidies.

5.2.7 eTransport

Our objective is to attain sustainable mobility, to achieve higher standards in the services provided and to create economical and environmentally friendly transport systems. The intelligent transport systems of the future are integrated systems which provide accessible traffic and transport information everywhere and at all times for both road operators and road users with the aid of user-friendly devices and information equipment.

We attribute particular importance to a comprehensive service in the area of travel information which contains dynamic and static data, traffic data and map information and is able to transmit the required information to drivers via various media (such as, for instance, radio, telephone, fax, SMS, Internet), in addition to network access. It is necessary to improve inter-modality and to encourage the public's preference for public transport in the area of city transport/communal transport. A further strategically important field in transport is the introduction of smart cards which is primarily necessary in the formulation of a standard ticket system in public transport.

5.3 Objectives and Tasks

The strategy serves one purpose fundamentally: informatics should be an efficient means for the Government in implementing its objectives set with regard to the creation of a knowledge-based information society. These objectives may be set along two basic value groups:

- individual values for the improvement of people's quality of life
- communal values for the improvement of society's quality of life.

The Government must facilitate the informatics-centred transformation of the processes and activities taking place in society and, through this, their modernization, with direct and indirect means.

Main objectives and tasks to be fulfilled by 2005:

- A Public Web reaching every locality and public administration institution in Hungary must be created;
- Public data and services must be made accessible via the web;
- The range of public or communal access facilities must be continuously extended (post offices, schools, libraries, digital culture centres, telecommunication centres, Internet cafés, etc.);
- Through a network of public or communal access points, electronic services must be made accessible to everyone;
- One quarter of households should have access to the worldwide web;
- There should be quality Internet access in all schools;
- The number of small and medium-sized enterprises using the web should double;
- The ratio of those in remote employment should reach 3%;
- In the interest of maintaining long-term competitiveness, a broad-band research network which serves the purposes of research, higher education and public collections and is independent of the public network must be developed on an ongoing basis.

In the interest of clarifying these sectoral objectives and integrating them into the Hungarian Information Society Strategy, the sectors concerned must formulate their part-strategies pursuant to the recommendations of the Ministry of Informatics and Telecommunication, together with the related plans of action.

6. Hungarian Information Society Strategy, Plan of Action

The Hungarian Information Society Strategy can only be successful as the strategy of the Government of the Republic of Hungary and, in a wider sense, as that of Hungarian society. The Ministry of Informatics and Telecommunication merely creates the basis for the strategy and coordinates and partially executes the government's plans of action to be implemented on the basis of the strategy, while the various ministries and the Prime Minister's Office, too, have a role in planning and execution.

The individual sectors are able to play this role by preparing their own informatics strategy and fulfilling the connected responsibilities. In this sense, we also regard governmental informatics (service provider state) and other areas functioning under the supervision of the Prime Minister's Office (e.g. regional and area development, national security, etc.) as "sectors". The Ministry of Informatics and Telecommunication and HISS offer to the sectors the additional opportunities that are generated through cooperation. As a result of the integration of the sectors' own strategies into the Hungarian Information Society Strategy, we shall be able to solve any common, non-sector-specific problems as well. We must therefore formulate the Hungarian Information Society Strategy concerning the tasks related to the construction of the information society and incorporating the necessary part-strategies, and must present it to the Government together with the medium-term plan of action.

6.2 Ongoing planning

The rapid changes in information communication technology require the re-writing of our long-term strategy from time to time. This necessitates basic and applied research, the results of which enable us to define new niches, opportunities and visions. Planning and the renewal and maintenance of the strategy may be guaranteed by a continuously updated and developed monitoring system, through the interpretation of the indicators and feedback offered by the system. Plans prepared for medium-term periods also require updating from time to time, and the annual plans of action must be drawn up on the basis of the updated strategy, in harmony with the planning of the annual budget.

This task can only be resolved through ongoing, "rolling", planning, the procedural, organizational and legal framework for which must be created. It is necessary to continuously monitor and update the Hungarian Information Society Strategy which will enable us to keep track of the progress achieved by the information society in Hungary.

6.3 Institutional supervision

The tasks related to the building of the information society require agreement from many sides. On the one hand, this stems from the fact that almost all these tasks concern all the ministries, in many cases, with a great deal of overlap (distance education, distance employment, distance administration, etc.). The other cause is that the resources of the implementation of the tasks set in the interest of the attainment of the strategic objectives are complex. While in 2003 we may rely primarily on funds provided by the central budget and private capital, as of 2004, we shall have to make good use of the available EU funds as well. This, too, requires HISS to be in full harmony with the National Development Plan.

In the interest of the coordinated performance of these tasks and cooperation between the state administration agencies, the Government has set up the Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee for the Information Society pursuant to the provisions set forth in Clauses 93 and 95 of Government Resolution No. 1088/1994. (IX.20.)Korm. on the Procedural Order of the Government and in Section 1, subsection (2), paragraph b) of Government Decree No. 141/2002. (VI.28.)Korm. on the Responsibilities and Competence of the Minister of Informatics and Telecommunication.

The Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee for the Information Society is an advisory, consulting and coordinating body which coordinates the government's measures necessary in the interest of the creation of the information society and takes part in the making of the related government decisions. We wish to stress that the Committee serves the Government's work in issues emerging in general in connection with the whole of the development of the information society, in cooperation with and by helping, through the mutual sharing of information, the work of the Government's Inter-Departmental Conciliation Committee on Informatics whose responsibility it is to tackle any governmental and state administration problems in the field of informatics.

6.4 Coordinating Tools of the Committee

In the interest of efficient coordination, the Committee may release recommendations on matters falling within its competence which are binding on the agencies coming under the supervision of the Government and serve as guidance for any other organizations concerned.

6.5 Organization of the Committee

The Chair of the Committee is the Minister of Informatics and Telecommunication; its members are the representatives of the ministries in the position of state secretary who are authorized to issue statements on policy, the Chair of the Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee on Development Policy, the representative of the Government Control Office authorized to issue statements on policy, the representative of the civil national security services and the representative of the Central Statistical Office authorized to issue statements on policy.

The representatives of the Constitutional Court, the Office of Parliamentary Commissioners, the National Council for Telecommunication and Informatics, the Economic Competition Office, Inforum, the National Association of Employers and Industrialists, the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Hungarian Standards Board may attend the meetings of the Committee with the right of consultation. In addition to those mentioned above, the Chair may also invite to the meetings of the Committee the representatives of the National Office for Regional Development of the Prime Minister's Office, the Chief Prosecutor's Office, the National Council of the Judiciary and the Parliament Office in matters concerning their respective organizations, as well as the representatives of any social and economic organizations concerned on the basis of their activities.

Based on the Chair's invitation, the representatives of social and economic organizations concerned on the basis of their activities in respect of certain items on the agenda may attend the meetings of the Committee with the right of consultation during the discussion of the relevant items.

The Committee's rules of operation must be drawn up in such a way that the opinions of the organizations attending with the right of consultation, which may be contrary to the approved decisions, should appear in the official documents of the Committee.

The Committee meets as often as required but at least quarterly.

The administrative responsibilities related to the establishment and operation of the Committee and the costs thereof are financed by the department of informatics.